NOTES FROM THE VOID

FREE

Issue 10, July/Early Sept 2026

Northampton's Music Magazine

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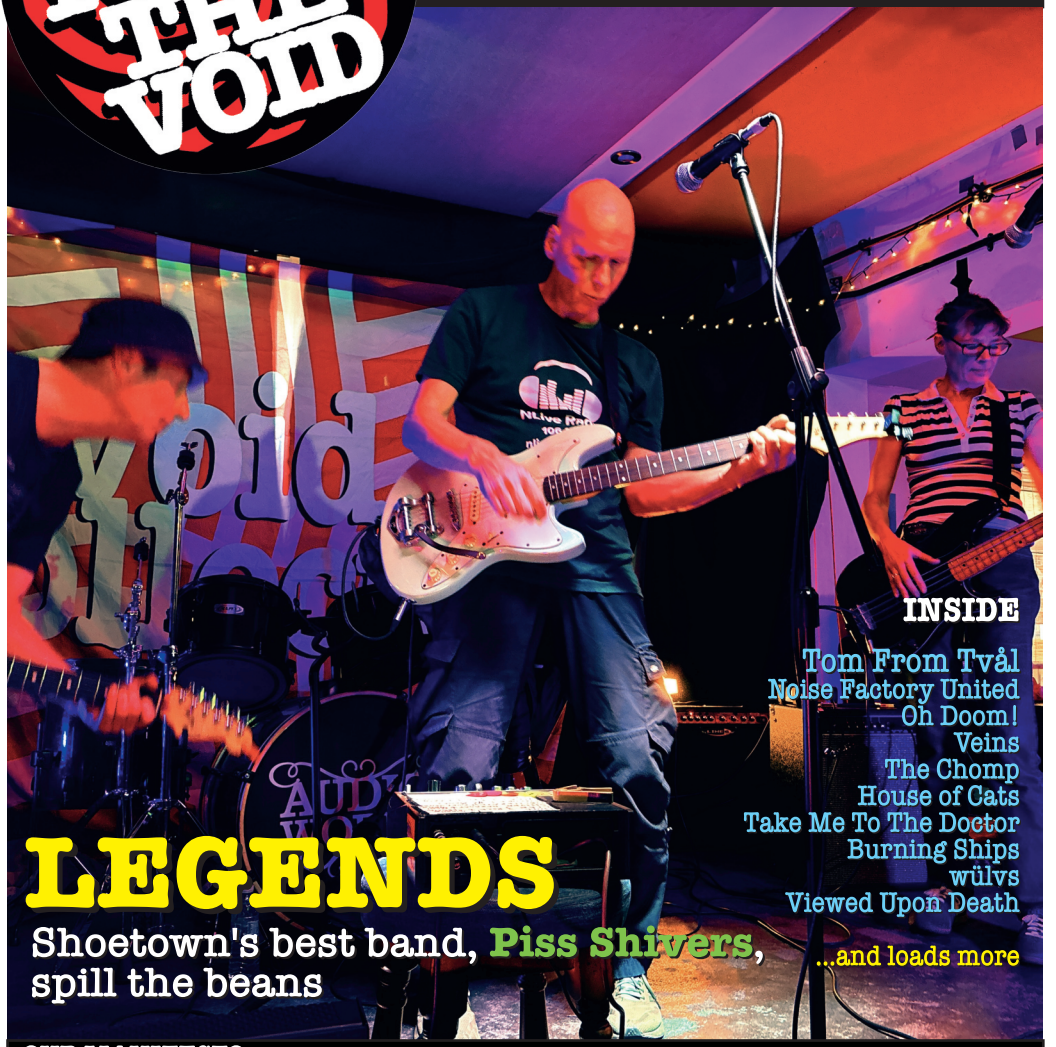

LEGENDS

Shoetown's best band, Piss Shivers, spill the beans

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OUR MANIFESTO

No one should be excluded from performing their music in public because of their neurotype, disability, age, or inexperience. A band playing their first gig is as valuable as someone playing their thousandth, and the age of a performer has no bearing on how good they are or whether they should be given good gigs.

Some neurotypes and mental health conditions make it harder for musicians to find opportunities and make networking an impossible task, which means the gigs don't come. We aim to remove that barrier.

We understand that some music is deemed too 'weird' to be given good gigs: that's wrong, they shouldn't be relegated to the outer edges of open mic nights - they should be on the bills at proper gigs, with their name on the poster.

We are a group of musicians from various bands, and we aim for full inclusivity, to give valuable shows to the people who are ignored by some of the gatekeepers. We stand against ageism, ableism, favouritism, or exclusion of any kind. We stand for the overlooked and marginalised.

We make each gig valuable to the acts performing, with long-lasting impact. We have an etiquette guide that makes the shows stress-free, and once the gig has ended, we do things for the acts who have performed, whether it's recording them cheaply (or even free), helping with instrument repairs, or enabling them to go and do what we do elsewhere.

There was a void, and we filled it.

Read the long version at https://linktr.ee/avoidcollective

Editor's Note

Editor **Alex Botten** has some issues with everything and everyone

This issue marks two milestones for Notes From The Void; the 1st anniversary of starting the zine, and the 10th issue (shhhh, don't mention issue 9.5, like Doctor Who, we need to prevent the numbering becoming completely unmanageable!). Issue one was done on a whim, when the A Void Collective was trying to work out what to do to increase our visibility within the local scene. I had a weird idea that I wanted to emulate 19th-century newspapers and have a very text-dense magazine, with the writing starting on the front page. As you can see, that didn't last! Beginning with issue 5, we introduced a colour cover, then went full colour throughout for issue 6. Over the last year of laying out the magazine, a visual language has emerged, and we now know what each issue should look like, what fonts to use, how to lay pages out, what goes where.

It's feeling like a real magazine now, which is why issue 9.5 saw us drop 'The A Void Collective fanzine' from the masthead and replace it with 'Northampton's Music Magazine'. And why not do that? We're literally the only show in town when it comes to a physical music publication. NMC might have recently relaunched, but it has (disappointingly to my mind) contented itself with being a website. Come on, NMC! Go back to being a physical publication! We did it, so you should be able to! I would really love to have more Northampton-based zines appearing... perhaps we should run a feature on how to do what we're doing in a future issue.

We didn't really mention much about Voidfest in the last issue, so maybe I should fix that! The three days passed in a bit of a blur, which was a weird feeling after so many months of planning, stress, sleepless nights and wondering why I had thought it was a good idea. In the end it all went very well indeed.

Alongside Jordan from The Keepers, Dave from Litesleeper, and Sheila from The Lab, I was on BBC Radio Northampton on the day before. In total, we got over 28 minutes of airtime spread between the breakfast show and drivetime in the evening. The next day, I ended up on ITV news, alongside a song performed by Peter Marchant from Megaphoney and a sneaky clip of House of Cats slipping into the 6pm bulletin. Apparently, that 4-minute slot would have cost around £80,000 if we'd bought it as advertising, so hopefully Audioworks (whose logo was clearly on screen for a lot of the report) and The Lab are happy with the publicity!

And the event itself? We sold out, the room was packed every single night, yet it still ran unbelievably smoothly. With 32 acts playing in one venue, it was inevitable that we'd have some technical problems, so it was a miracle that there was only one (during Woegetter's set. Pro-tip from Mark: get your drum machine power supplies right, kids). At the start of the week, I'd vowed I'd never do it again. But a month on and we're already planning 2027.

We've got a lot in this issue, due to slotting an extra show in during September after the Ceremony East Coast gig fell due to some confusion about dates, resulting in a double booking, and we've introduced a new 'Album of the Month' plaudit, as the local scene continues to confound and amaze with such incredible music. Hope you enjoy it.

Alex Botten

TITS IN FOR THE LADIES

House of Cats bassist, **Cheryl Botten-Smith**, on inequality

I recently saw a video where **Lyly Riott** from French/English band **French Toast** got into an altercation with security guards after taking her top off at a gig at Dingwalls. Her argument was that male band members were doing it, and therefore she should be able to. This got me thinking and uncovered some deeply buried frustrations of my own.

With talks of two-tier policing currently rife, perhaps now is the time to highlight the inequality of women's experience of the world. This experience is sadly not up for debate, it is factually reflected in our lives. Male privilege is everywhere in the music world, and if we are ever to do anything about it we must first recognise it exists.

I have experienced many a gig where the drummer has been naked from the waist up, and that's absolutely fine, but if a woman made the same move, it would be seen as transgressive or worse still, criminal! **Iggy Pop** topless? No one bats an eyelid. The **Red Hot Chilli Peppers** naked except for socks on their genitals? What scamps! **Zia McCabe** of **Dandy Warhols** going topless during their heyday, **Wendy O Williams** with nothing but tape covering her nipples, or **Pussy Riot** ending up naked? Whoa there, stop the press, this requires a slot on the BBC Ten O'Clock News!

Now, I'm not saying men shouldn't be able to go topless, and neither am I advocating for women to whip their bras off either. Heaven forbid, I would never put anyone through having to deal with my rather heavy bust on show, but equally, that all sits very uncomfortably for me. Why should I be treated differently from men? I often rant to Alex when I see a man peeing beside a car whilst on journeys, and get really annoyed that this is accepted, whereas a woman couldn't be seen crouching to pee (remember the headlines when runner **Paula Radcliffe** did just that?). Why not? And if a woman can hold her bladder until the nearest service station, why can't a man? Who makes these social rules? And how can this still be the case in 2026?

What's the solution?

I'm not sure there is one that wouldn't impact one side or the other. Neither telling men to keep covered or allowing women the exact same rights solves the problem in a way broader society would find acceptable. What I do urge is that you think about it and how your actions can support equality, ensuring that you don't blindly keep reenforcing the unspoken male privilege that continues to exist.

UNTESTED COMBINATIONS

Tom Wright, one half of electronic duo **Tvål** talks streaming, Swedish, and synths

Tvål are one of those special bands that seem to almost exist on another level to their local scenes. A duo quietly going about the business of making superb records, selling out shows, and gaining plaudits from every direction, they refrain from acting like huge stars, preferring a head-down approach to their scene stature. Much like our cover stars Piss Shivers this issue, they prefer to let the music do the talking. Striking out solo for the A Void Collective show at the Lab in July, Tom from Tvål spoke to Alex Botten.

Tom, you'll be playing our July show in 'Tom from Tvål' solo mode. What can we expect that'll be different from a 'normal' Tvål show?
It'll be similar in some respects; Dean, who's my partner in Tvål, couldn't make this date (and we thought rather than push it back I'd do something myself), and he's the singer and plays a couple of keyboards, so it'll be a bit different. Different tunes too. I'll be running 3 synths (a bass, a mono synth and a poly synth) plus a drum machine and a sampler, which is my usual setup. It'll be instrumental, except for the odd vocal sample chucked in and is based on things I wrote on a computer in London a long time ago - so it's kind of from another life for me. It's not a million miles from Tvål, but a little bit more sampladelic than we get up to in the band and adds to the overall mix some of the stuff I love that hasn't featured so much in Tvål yet - David Axelrod, early 70s Gainsbourg, dub and good old classic breaks as well as our classic kosmiche and electronica leanings.

The Swedish word Tvål means 'soap'; how did you end up using it as a band name, and why am I so jealous that it's so great! Band names need to sound good and look good written down, and Tvål is utterly brilliant.
Thanks very much! We were looking for a one-word name, and it seemed like pretty much every word in the English language had been taken by someone on Spotify. I lived in Stockholm for a while, and learned a chunk of Swedish while I was there. We were thinking of calling the band 'Två', which is 'two' in Swedish, as there are two of us, and it was our second band together, but it had been overused already. Plus, 'tvål' scanned nicely on paper.

What led to the formation of Tvål?
Dean and I were in a band called Thee Telepaths beforehand. It was psych rock, which we loved doing, but during the pandemic, while we were using computers at home to do the arrangements for TT's second LP, we started writing stuff between us that had a more electronic feel. As it turned out, TT had pretty much run its course, and so one Saturday not long after, after 3 pints in the back garden of the Wig & Pen, we walked into PMT (R.I.P.), bought a drum machine, and that was the start of that.

It's been over a year since the release of Tvål's debut album, can we expect a follow-up soon? Will there be a solo record as well, or is 'Tom from Tvål' a live-only project?
We have been working on a follow-up since the tail-end of last year, having spent a lot of the year promoting the first one. We had 14 potential tracks developing, and narrowed that down to 10 that we've been working on pretty hard, but we're taking a little breather to let it marinate a bit. It's really good stuff, but we want it to be much better than the last one, so we've put a bit of pressure on ourselves. The last album took 3 years to write and then record, and as part of that process, we stepped away from it for about 3 months in 2024, which really helped. I think it's likely that the next Tvål LP will be out in spring next year if it's going to be as good as we'd like it to be. The stuff I'm working up for this gig is likely to come out at some point too - it's all written, it just needs to be rearranged a bit and then re-recorded. Maybe some of it will work its way into Tvål stuff.

In the time you've been active making music, what changes have you seen that you wish hadn't happened? Do you feel, like we do at NFTV, that the music industry is almost irreparably broken, or do you think there's a way out of the corporate greedhole recorded music has fallen into?
The reduction in the number of venues has been awful - I've seen so many venues close over the years, for things ranging from plain old indifference to rising costs to gentrification, where the new neighbours just didn't like the noise. I have a kind-of-like/totally-hate relationship with streaming - it's been great for discovering new music, but has removed some of the mystery and the thrill of finding new things lurking in the racks of record shops. Also, while it can take you to a bigger audience, it's a pretty excellent way to stunt your own vinyl sales. I don't think there's a single artist out there, at whatever level, who paid for their next album with the revenue from Spotify for their last one. While that's the case, a very small number of people are making an awful lot of money from it (which is the way it seems to be with so many things in life), and I genuinely think that AI is going to make that far worse, so there's your corporate greedhole in action... How bad that gets - or whether it can be reversed - will ultimately be down to musicians themselves. There's a lot of dross out there in the mainstream, people writing to formulae to generate money, but pretty soon there won't be a need for human beings to be making the same old music - AI will be able to replicate everything that's been done before really easily. The grass-roots scenes are where the great new ideas will come from, as always, so it's important that the live scene continues to thrive and that folks are getting out in support of it, and musicians need to be working to keep music exciting by challenging themselves. It's hard to create completely original music, but there are lots of untested combinations still to explore. I think that the sampling culture was enabling just that until it became a massive business opportunity for the legal profession at the turn of the 90s, but I won't go there now!

On the plus side, the internet democratised music to a degree and gave a lot of people the chance to be heard. When I wrote some of the music that I'll be playing on the night, social media and streaming barely existed and I was foisting CD-Rs into people's hands in the hope they'd listen to it, worrying that in my mid-20s my time was just about up... Also, in the last 15-20 years, it's been really nice to see a lot of the ageism disappear, and audiences become more of a mixture, age-wise - especially at a grass-roots level, which is where a lot of the major changes that have kept music exciting originate, so more power to that and to the audiences that make that scene possible!

What's next for you and/or the band?
Maybe another couple of gigs before the end of the year, but mainly focusing on getting the Tvål album finished and then, toward the end of 2026, planning what happens in 2027 in terms of gigs and other things to promote it. While we take that little rest from recording the LP, I'm going to start recording the stuff that I'm playing on our night, and see what happens with that.

"Tvål" by Tvål can be purchased on vinyl via https://crackedplastic.bandcamp.com/album/tv-l
Tom performs as "Tom From Tvål at the Lab on the 30th of July

JUST THE TWO OF US

Take Me To The Doctor talk pedals, local scenes, and more

It's been a year since we last covered you. What's been happening?

We have been working on some new material and trying to make some new sounds. We have been listening to a lot of Alien Ant Farm, Crossfade and After. Real good bands that we totally recommend.

How do you think the band as a duo is developing? Whenever we've seen you you sound fuller and more confident.

We have been experimenting with some new pedals to get that fuller sound, and it's been really fun. We try to be confident, but it can be hard. We want to stand out, but that's scary in its own way.

No EP yet?? Come on! Release your brilliant songs! Seriously though, what's with that?

Recording is super hard! We find ourselves being way too critical of what recordings we get, and so it takes us a long time to put anything out. We have got a collection of songs that will only be released on an EP, so we are aiming for winter/ early next year...that's the goal anyway.

A year on, how has your experience of the local scene changed? You've played in Coventry a lot, how does Shoetown compare?

Coventry and Northampton are both great places and have awesome music scenes. We enjoy being part of both, though there are definitely more bands in Northampton.

What's been your favourite experience of the last 12 months musically?

Getting to play Voidfest is definitely up there. We had such a great time and felt really welcome. We also hadn't written any new songs in quite a while and now have about three or four. Having new material to play is a massive confidence boost.

Lastly, who would you recommend from the local scene that other people check out?

Viewed Upon Death! We met them at Voidfest, they were really nice guys and played some great music. Definitely ones to watch!

instagram.com/takemetothedoctorofficial

ARE YOU THE FARMER?

Noise Factory United are not from London

Noise Factory United, it's a name maybe a few people in Northampton will know from your previous show here, but it is likely to be new to most. Can you tell us who you are?
With an acronym of NFU, we could be mistaken for a bunch of farmers from Hampshire. We're actually a gnarly bunch from Portsmouth who chose the initials as a nod to the origins of true rural dissent and solidarity with the Tolpuddle Martyrs. The reference to Factory is a nod to one of our favourite post-punk record labels and a reminder that class still matters. We love creating songs on guitar and synth with quirky lyrics and wonky melodies.

You last played here so long ago that it was my previous band ÜLV's first show. Do you remember anything about that gig? Also on the bill were One Way Ticket and Dead Freights.
Absolutely. It was one of those nights that stays with you; the energy and vibes were just great from the start. Picky Promotions were awesome hosts who were genuinely welcoming, as were the crowd, which is something we never take for granted when playing somewhere new. Musically, we were blown away by the sonic magnitude of ÜLV and the immersive wall of course, haunting vocals, and the most intriguing, voluminous and complex pedalboard pushing two tiny 15W amps. Next, we loved the vocal harmonies of One Way Ticket and then had a good stomp to the righteously vitriolic set of The Dead Freights.

What is your local scene like? I'm always fascinated to hear about what's similar and what's different between our little islands of sound.
Portsmouth has a diverse scene with space for pretty much everything but particularly excels at alternative music (in the broadest sense - if that's physically possible?). We're lucky to have such a convivial, original, and supportive scene here. There's a real independence of spirit and we're spoilt for choice for live music with promoters such as ABH Promotions, Neu Waves, Psych, Strong Island Recordings, and Weekend Offender Records.

You recently released a rather good EP. Is an album on the cards, or has the streaming era rendered the album obsolete?
We're over the moon you think that! We've started working on some new material that might make a good fit for an album. In some ways, the streaming era has increased the need for the album format. If we take an album as a sonic journey that eschews instant gratification and commodification, then there's clearly an appetite. We decided to release Visions from the Frontier on vinyl after repeated requests at gigs. It seems people still want something tangible, something you can hold and live with that reinforces the music with accompanying artwork.

If you could change anything about the way the music industry works, what would it be?
Can we change two things? Firstly, streaming royalties that actually sustain artists instead of financing nefarious global catastrophes. Secondly, more diversity in all its forms (age, class, ethnicity, gender) in who gets signed, programmed etc.

What's next for NFU?
Getting to know Northampton better for our second rendezvous, hopefully continuing to attract an audience for our wonkily melodic anxieties, and thanking you for the interview!

noisefactoryunited.com

THE SUMMER OF SLOP

Where 2025 saw 'Brat Summer' being loudly embraced as hordes of easily led pop fans fell for clever viral marketing from Charlie XCX, this year's Solstice is dogged by a far less wholesome ocean of ubiquitous content. Much like the players marching onto the pitches of the World Cup, all in their identical uniforms, hard to tell one from the other at a distance, so the Facebook and Instagram accounts of local pubs, covers bands, restaurants and even taxi services have taken on a homogenous sheen. Over and over again, the black background, the slightly gold tinted text, the glistening honey-hued pint glasses, the not-quite-right smiling face, the questionable ratio of tuners to guitar strings... the Summer of Slop is upon us.

Yes, these hot summer months will forever be remembered as the moment the general population discovered you could make a generic low quality poster for your event by simply typing the details into ChatGPT and waiting for it to spew out its stolen stylings. Who cares that each one wastes water in a far flung deprived county somewhere in a square state in the US? Those suffering poor people don't live anywhere near the Squandered Chance* pub so why should the lazy landlord, desperate to get back to serving his clients in 'this financial climate' give two shits about poisoned water! He's got pints to pull and a 'WORRLD CUP' event to publicise! His clients don't care that Saturday night's poster promoting Chunked Up Cops (playing all the hits of Foo Fighters, Stereophonics, Green Day, and The Killers) looks exactly like tomorrow night's promo for New Clear Fuse Ron (playing all the hits of The Killers, Green Day, Stereophonics and Foo Fighters), or the advert for the taxi company down the road, or the pub next door's identical events, or the roast dinners being served at The Suckling Pig next bank holiday Monday, or the advert seeking a chef to cook those roasts. No, they love the familiarity, just as they love the identical cover bands that vomit the same songs into their ears every night while they drink the same cheap lager and eat the same 'posh' crisps.

Maybe they, punter and publican alike are merely getting what they want, what they deserve, lowest common denominator slop on all fronts, nothing too challenging, nothing 'woke', just good old fashioned gruel. You know where you stand with gruel, you can trust gruel, even if it does think your pub is called The King Billy Billy.

**some names have been altered.*

In the perfect world everyone would already know Oh Doom!, but sadly, we're in the news report reality from Robocop. Tell all of us suffering souls who you are.
Just 4 gloomy lads from Hertfordshire (and London). We are Phil (Guitar, lead vocals, lord of doomy songwriting, smoothie operator, writer of weird novels), Jonny (more guitars - specifically the atmospheric and more oomphy ones, backing vocals, interviews, pedal enthusiast, champion sandwich maker), Shaun (drums, keys, backing vocals, artwork, videos, TikTok, wrestler, smuggler, general polymath), Assad (bass, backing vocals, Lebanese pop star, frequent flier and hotel afficionado, drinks tea without milk). We came together a couple of years ago as a three-piece, with Jonny joining in early 2025 to round things out, and here we are.

Your singles have received great reviews in these pages, often drawing comparisons with Mogwai and Telstar Ponies. Who are you actually influenced by?
Firstly, thank you for the kind words! It really means a lot to us when people say nice things about us and enjoy what we're doing. We definitely get Mogwai a lot, and while we've not deliberately poured Mogwai juice into what we do, we can see why people say it. Telstar Ponies was an interesting comparison, just simply as none of us were mega familiar, so after it was said, we went and studied up a bit. A nice gentleman compared us to Lana Del Rey once. Took a while to wrap our heads around that at first, but i guess it was about melancholy. Our tastes and influences are quite diverse, to be honest. There's a bit of Slint in there, stuff like Trail of Dead, At the Drive In, heavier stuff like Amenra and the kinds of bands who play ArcTanGent, Deafheaven, Sadness, Do Make Say Think. I guess lots of post-rock, various kinds of metal, shoegaze/doomgaze, post hardcore, and just good songwriting. Stuff like Songs:Ohia. You'll also hear harmonies in our stuff, because we all sing. Barbershop fans, the lot of us.

Your artwork is always superb. What's the creation process?
Shaun: The creation process varies from song to song, release to release. The cover for our single 'Distant Ghosts' was pretty easy; take the song title and create a cute little ghost that could be the cover art and also used for stickers and t-shirts. The artwork for our most recent single, 'How To Destroy Anything' was a little different. It started with the idea of creating a poster for your wall with advice to help you destroy things, such as relationships, furniture and even your own body, but that was too ambitious. I'd been trying my hand at wood/lino cutting. To gain inspiration, I began googling, then digging into archives, until I found the 15th-century artist Albrecht Dürer, who carved and printed intricate, religious-based artwork. Albrecht's artwork is so emotive with such movement, and I attempted to emulate that.
For me, 'How To Destroy Anything' is about the cause and first steps to destroying something. Which is why I choose plucking a single petal from a rose. That's the beginning of things unravelling. You think, "It's just a single petal, how much harm can that do?", and before you know it, there's chaos and destruction around you.
The creation process is I sketch the artwork, get some sharp tools, put the artwork on a piece of lino and ready my body for hours of painstaking work, carving out every line and each section (without messing up—there's no CTRL+Z with this type of art), until I'm left with a finished piece of lino that can be lathered with ink. A piece of paper or card is then dropped on top of the ink, then with a bit of pressure and a lot of hope, I pull the paper away from the lino, and I should have the artwork.

You recently played in Italy, how the hell did that happen, and what was it like?
That came about through our label, Socks On Records. They do a sort of exchange thing with some lovely folk in the Lake Como area of Italy, where some Socks On bands go over and play with some local(ish) Italian bands, and then the reverse happens later in the year, where the lucky Italians get to spend a few days in sunny Peterborough. It was our first gig abroad as Oh Doom, so we were perhaps a little concerned about whether our gear would make it unharmed, but that was all good. We had a lovely time playing the gig, where we think we gave a decent account of ourselves, though our stage banter was perhaps a little limited in a foreign tongue. "Grazie mille, Como di lago", etc. We made a little mini holiday/band bonding thing out of it as well. Probably had one too many Peronis.

We're always fascinated by local music scenes, what's yours like?
What's local to us is kind of a strange concept, as most of us live in Hertfordshire, but we feel a bit closer to the scene in Peterborough, around Socks On Records. Shaun and Phil are both from around there originally, too. It's a nice, supportive scene. We love playing at The Ostrich, which always has a good crowd, with great bands playing, and some of them have become pals, and definitely bands who we love to play shows with.

Who do you rate on the local circuit?
Honestly, we want to shout out loads of bands we've seen and played with, with our loose definition of local. Das Kapitans, Dead Leaves, Rudimentary Paste, Good Job Kid, Dan the D, Mices, For I The badger, Soviet Films and loads more from the Socks on gang. A-Tota-So are excellent and pals, who we love dearly. Loved Skybeard when we played with them, and Dave is an old pal of Jonny's. We recently supported Kulk, who were excellent, and once we were accidentally booked for a doom metal night, which turned out to be an amazing evening with Errornaut and Orme. We're supporting Indifferent Engine soon, whose album is on heavy rotation.

Finally, what's coming up next? Is there an album on the horizon?
Loads. We've got a few gigs coming up in Leighton Buzzard, Luton, Hitchin, one we've just booked with you lovely lot at The Lab (our second time there - thanks for having us back!), and I think one in Nottingham around Christmas time as well. We've also been talking to the Socks On guys about recording an acoustic session, following a really fun acoustic show we did for them last year in Peterborough in a vegan Mexican restaurant. Lastly, yes, there's an album in the works. We think it's mostly written now. One or two in the mix for inclusion you may have heard already, and there's a bunch of new stuff at the demoing phase, some of which we may well be playing live when we play Northampton in September. Not that you're our guinea pigs, promise. We'd love to get the album out by the end of the year. If not it should be early next year.

instagram.com/ohdoomband

OH DOOM! SPEAK

BLOODLETTING

Veins let it all out

photo Louise Phillips

Who are Veins?
Veins are an alt-rock band based in Corby consisting of Stevie Rees (lead vocals/guitar), Dan Appleyard (drums), Scott Warner (bass) and Luke Smith (guitar/vocals).

Tell us about your new album
We have just released our debut album 'A New Forever' after 10 years as a band.
We originally started recording it in 2020, but for various reasons, we only finished it towards the end of last year. We're really happy with how it has turned out and are glad to finally be able to let people hear it, but at the same time, it's also nice to finally draw a line under it, as it has been hanging over us for quite some time now. The reviews have been pretty positive, and it's nice to hear people's perspectives. I think we sometimes forget that, despite being old to us, the songs are new to other people.

You've just played your all-day festival, Forever Fest. What was the idea behind it, and how did it go?
As the album has taken so long, we really wanted to celebrate the release with a launch show. Initially, we were going to put together a lineup of mates' bands and bands we've played with previously, but eventually we decided to also include some younger bands we haven't played with, and it kind of grew into an all-dayer. It's been months in the planning, and we've certainly been anxious about how it would go, but the day went well. We had around 100 people through the door, plus all the people from the bands, so it was a good turnout. We had one band pull out in the morning, but that probably did us a favour as we were struggling for time to get everything set up. We finished sound-checking about 5 minutes before doors, but despite so many bands, the day pretty much ran like clockwork after that. Everyone who played was brilliant, good to work with, and great musicians.

We hear a lot of different influences in the album. Who do you cite as the biggest inspirations?
Stevie is the main songwriter, and he's influenced by stuff like early Pumpkins, Swervedriver and Jeff Buckley, but his sound, more specifically his atmospheric guitar parts, are mostly influenced by Sigur Rós.
Dan has more of a metal influence and counts bands like Misery Signals, Dillinger Escape Plan, Thrice and Deftones as influences on his drumming style. Scott likes melodic bass lines and cites people like The Cure's Simon Gallup, Peter Hook of Joy Division & New Order and Paul McCartney as influences. It's quite a range of different influences, but when we pull them together, with some orchestral parts thrown in, it gives Veins our distinct sound: well-crafted songs with atmospheric layers, driving bass and massive drums. The songs range from delicate and intimate in places to big and heavy in others. We find it hard to know how best to describe our sound but other people have referenced Cinematic Alt-Rock, Post-Rock, Shoegaze and even Prog. Luke wasn't in the band when we wrote and recorded the songs, so it will be interesting to see what his fresh input adds going forward.

The production on the album is tremendous. Tell us about the recording process.
We have Dan to thank for that. We originally recorded the drums and bass in January 2020 at Parlour Studio in Kettering with Jay Russell (drummer of Yard Act) engineering, but then the pandemic hit, and everything else was recorded individually at home. Dan took on production duties, and after a bit of a learning curve and some trial and error, such as re-recording all the bass, we eventually got there. Dan also mastered the album. We've had so many positive comments about the production in reviews. He really has done a fantastic job.

Who do you rate from the local scene?
There are lots of great bands in Northamptonshire, and we were lucky enough to have 8 of them join us at our launch show, but some newer stand-out bands for us are Beings, Delve Boy and Creation Myths.

Finally, what's next for Veins?
June has been busy with the album release and supporting shows, including the all-dayer and our first London headline show, but we have a bit of time to take stock and figure out what we're going to do next. However, there are a few shows in the diary, we're headlining the opening night of TwinFest at Roadmender on July 30th, then we're at The Lab in Northampton on August 27th for A Void Collective and then RoseShire Festival on the 29th August alongside loads of great local bands and established acts like The Charlatans, Bluetones and Cast.

instagram.com/veinsbanduk

POETRY

Void Clock

You'd best beware
The Void clock is ticking
Those 30 minutes are sacrosanct
To overrun is to invite the wrath of the committee

And why not a half hour?
"No band alive"
A great man once said
"Is good enough to play for longer than 25"

But we know what you're thinking
"The setlist is absolute!"
Well, try us, please -
Under the stage we have installed a chute

With one lever pull
And the sound of a bell
Bandmates, instruments, all
Will rot for all time in a sulphurous Hell

Anon

Cool

I'm so fucking cool and don't you dare try to deny it
Where I hang out, how I live, maybe you should try it
The car I drive, the clothes I wear are timeless, classy, nifty
Or would be if I wasn't quite a few years on from fifty.

Russell Heyworth

The Gardener

I'm a man of the soil
Unfit to toil
but born to lean on a shovel
and menace the earth
The scourge of annelids!
In the sun I watch them boil
As displaced beetles scurry to and fro
I laugh at the aphids...
Perhaps the heat has got to me
but between these garden walls
I'm a deranged Monty Don
a mad, giant warden
high in his earthy panopticon
Dreaming a hierarchy of things that crawl
An industrial complex with jobs for all!
Except for the slugs of course
It is for them I reserve my ire
Likewise the worms
they too can perish in the sun's fire

Andrew Slack

SHADOWS ON THE MOON

Andrew Slack catches up with House of Cats

So, what's new since I interviewed you last year?
Alex: We released our debut album in January, and we've written and performed some new songs. Oh, and a clip of one of our songs ended up on the ITV News!
Cheryl: Well, I think we are a lot more confident in our style and seem to have found who we are as a band. I'm loving playing the deep repetitive grounding basslines while Alex plays the complex, pretty bits on top. There's been a lot of thought put into our sound and the effects we are using, so my pedal board has definitely grown!

I can definitely hear that. How would you say the gigging experience evolved?
Alex: We've learned what works and what doesn't, as well as how to make stage volume work without amps. Each gig throws up a new challenge, and that then presents us with an opportunity to work out solutions.
Cheryl: I still love playing The Lab the best. It just feels like home, and that helps so much when you're a bit nervous! I think it will always be the place where I'm most relaxed and get the most enjoyment.

How is the bass playing coming along?
Cheryl: I think I've made so much progress over the last year. I don't look quite so much like a deer in the headlights when I'm playing now and I don't need to constantly look at the strings when I'm playing so that's a win!

Do you have any plans to sing?
Cheryl: I would absolutely love to sing. We have discussed writing some carefully curated songs, which means I could stop playing briefly to be able to sing. Being new to the bass, I currently find that my hands stop working as soon as I try to sing, so multitasking is off limits for now. Ask me again next year!

The kind of music you play (to my ears) is a slow, deliberate, droning noise rock, and something that live audiences don't always get. Is this ever a problem?
Cheryl: We have had a couple of gigs with hushed silence after a couple of our songs. That has made me very paranoid for days afterwards, believing that we're actually rubbish, but I just think that we are quite different, and so we probably won't appeal to everyone. I'm now trying to manifest the confidence in myself just to play and enjoy myself, and not care so much! Hopefully, that will come across and make us more interesting.
Alex: One of the less useful effects of using in-ear monitors is that I feel a bit cut off from the audience, so if they don't clap loudly, it sometimes feels like they've reacted with indifference. We've had a couple of shows where we've reached the end of a song, and there's not been a single clap, absolute silence. Certainly makes me wonder if we're hearing the band differently to everyone else! To me, we sound like a fairly easy-to-follow, slightly noisy post-rock/shoegazey type band, but does anyone else hear us that way?

Probably a stupid question, but does the album title 'Entrance' refer to a doorway or the act of holding someone under a spell?
Alex: We chose the title because of the double meaning, but I pronounce it the latter way.
Cheryl: I pronounce it the other way, as it's our entrance to the scene.

Speaking of the album, 'Ways and Means' is a real standout, and you never play it live! Why?
Cheryl: Well, Andrew, I'm so glad you mentioned that as 'Ways and Means' has always been a bit of a favourite of mine, but Alex is a bit down on it, and it never makes the cut! Now I have the perfect ammunition to fight for it to have a spotlight, so watch this space!
Alex: Cheryl loves it, but I never felt like it amounted to much. It's just two chords and a really (to me anyway) obvious melody. It makes me think of the Jesus & Mary Chain or The Ronettes, and I worried that it was a bit nothing.... but it seems I'm wrong!

You are wrong! It's a hit! Finally, is there a second album in the works?
Alex: Yes, probably! We've got new songs, and we've reworked some of the older stuff so much that it's very different. I suspect we'll have something out before the end of the year that will be a mixture of changed older material and the new songs.

House of Cats' debut is available on Bandcamp. Catch them live at the Lab on the 30th of July

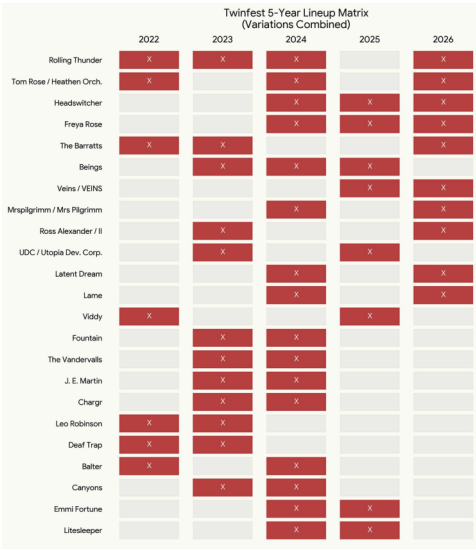
instagram.com/house_of_cats_band

We Need To Talk About TWINFEST

Alex Botten shares some figures and thoughts

Firstly, I must caveat all of the following with a clear and unambiguous statement: I love Twinfest, I love that it exists, I love that our town has such a long-running event supporting local talent, and I genuinely like those of the people who run it that I know.
But certain things need to be said.

Every year, Twinfest invites participants from the local scene, and every year, a lot of them get an email saying that due to just how many bands applied, there was no space for them. With this being the case, you'd expect every year to have a completely different lineup, but you'd be wrong. Over and over across the last 5 years (at least), the same bands appear. Last year was the third time in a row Beings had played (more if you count their singer's solo acoustic performances), this year is the third time in a row that Headswitcher have appeared, same for Freya Rose. Out of the last five years, Rolling Thunder have played an astonishing four of them (and if you look at the last 9 years, they've played 7!)



I'm not criticising the bands here, they've every right to take any gig they get offered, and Twinfest is a high-profile event you'd be silly to turn down. What I am critical of is the lack of imagination that seems to have settled on the selection process. Across the 26 bands and solo performers playing (including the two twin town guests), only 3 featured in the 32-act lineup of Voidfest, and 10 acts have played Twinfest before within the last 4 years. The chart on this page shows the repeats over the last 5 years.

The organisers probably need to hear this - the annual Twinfest rejection email, followed by the same bands playing year after year, is starting to become a running joke within the Northampton music scene (at least the part I'm in contact with), and that's not a place anyone wants to be. Yes, it's always going to be a challenge to ensure fairness when picking bands for these events, but the way to do this is to be transparent. Voidfest is already putting out feelers for 2027 to see what appetite there is for it (spoiler: loads), and we've made it very clear that bands who didn't play 2026 will be prioritised for slots. We're also clear that we personally ask some bands to play (this year we asked Oscillator, Litesleeper, Woegetter, Megaphoney, and Headswitcher) - we're wanting the event to be successful so that it makes money for the Lab, after all, and that requires acts that we know will pull a crowd. Only once we've found a place for everyone who didn't play this year will we look at applications from those who did.

Inevitably, there will be duplications in a relatively small scene, but over 40% of the acts playing Twinfest '26 have played it within the last 4 years (with Rolling Thunder having played 71% of the last 9 events). Those ten bands could be replaced by (off the top of my head) Bio-Exile, Viewed Upon Death, Piss Shivers, Skybeard, Joe Bombast, Oscillator, Joy Disposal Unit, Tom Gage, Take Me To The Doctor, or Maevis Darkhorse and you'd have a fresher looking line up and less discontent in the local scene. And if none of those have even applied? Maybe ponder on why they didn't.

Perhaps the organisers should adopt our 'you can't play twice in a row unless there are slots left over once new acts are accounted for' policy? Could that fix things? Maybe accommodating all bands from Northampton before programming in acts from Corby or Kettering or MK?

Of course, in 10 years time, someone might be accusing Voidfest of exactly the same issue, and I'll be eating humble pie for failing to fully comprehend just how hard it is to introduce variety when your raw material is a limited pool of local acts.

Ultimately, it's not my place to tell anyone else what to do, but I'd be failing as a writer if I didn't point out that Twinfest is starting to look like an established set of bands playing over and over again. As a result it's seemingly a little bit tired and out of touch, resting on favouritism and (presumably) putting on friends rather than truly representing the Northampton music scene, which I'm sure is not the intention. Twinfest is a very good thing, and it needs to continue for as long as the organisers can keep it going.

Perhaps it's time for a reboot?

For anyone who is a regular gig-goer in Northampton, the name Piss Shivers (or pissshivers) is going to be a familiar one. Playing skeletal pop songs over a ticking vintage Korg drum machine, the trio of Jonny Mattocks (guitar and lead vocals), Kathy Schaer (bass and backing vocals), and Steve Gordon (guitar and backing vocals) have charmed audiences over the last few years. In my opinion, they're Northampton's greatest band, a trio of musicians with a vast musical history (seriously, Spacemen 3, The Breeders, Jazz Butcher, to name just three of a very lengthy list) who instead of lording it over the scene choose a path of quiet humility and understated class. We've covered them before, but finally managed to pin them down for a full interview.

The individual members of Piss Shivers have a really rather stellar musical history, yet you never shout about it. Now's the time! Tell our readers about your musical journeys and how you've ended up where you are now.

Jonny: I taught myself drums by guessing what drum was being hit whilst listening along to my mum and dads record collection, then my Saturday job money vinyl. I loved the early drum machine/beat box sounds from the seventies/early eighties and would try to emulate them on my acoustic kit. Fast forward to '86, I joined The Apple Creation and we played locally (with The Tell Tell Hearts, notably). Sunday evenings were spent at the King Billy in town playing stand up drums with the landlord, Roger Sayer, and Graham his sax player. He'd pay me in pints of Old Peculiar and then put me in a taxi home – perfect! Working nights at Kodak, I answered an ad in the Mercury and Herald newspaper to join Rugby band Spacemen 3 and many other bands/ session work followed on after that. I'm grateful to have met some amazing and fun people in those years and feel lucky to still be involved creating, and now, teaching music.

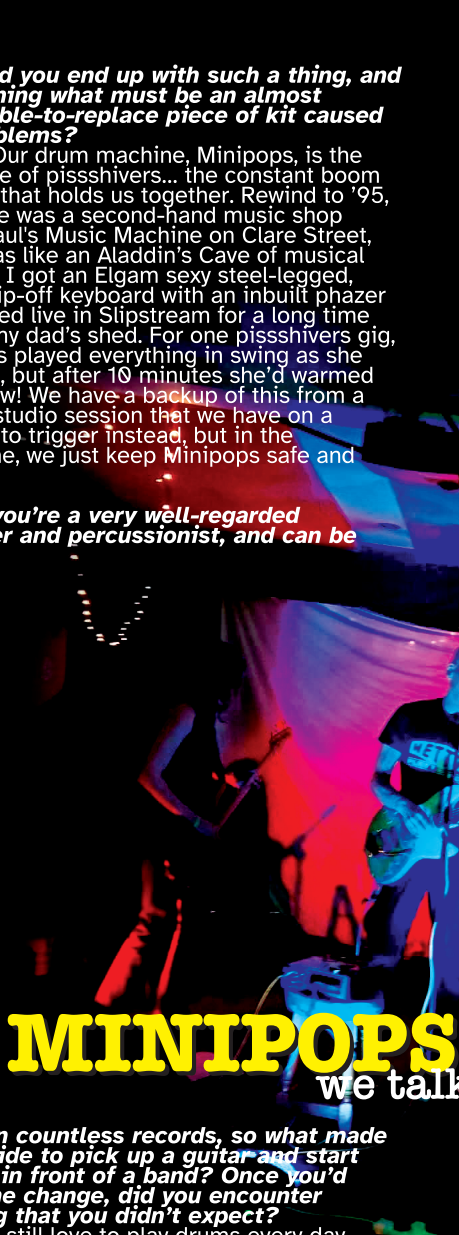
Kath: I met Jon when I was working at Far Heath Recording Studio in the early 90s. I'd been learning to play guitar, and Jon was always positive and willing to join in. We formed a covers band called The Love Junkies with Mark Refoy (Spacemen 3, Spiritualized, Pet Shop Boys, currently in Slipstream - Ed) and did a handful of gigs around town. It was a bit unhinged and a lot of fun. I met Pat Fish (The Jazz Butcher - Ed) along the way and ended up playing bass in Wilson. We did a lot of gigs over about 10 years. Pat was very funny and quite exacting, and I learned loads. When Jon started learning the guitar and writing songs, I was happy to try and add something to what he was doing, but it took a while for him to find his feet. We'd both known Steve for years, and he naturally understood Jon's songs from the first time we played together. Music is about having fun making music you like. We're all older and don't have any aspirations above and beyond that.

People who have seen you will know that a key part of your sound is a vintage Korg Minipop analogue drum machine. How on earth did you end up with such a thing, and has running what must be an almost impossible-to-replace piece of kit caused any problems?

Jonny: Our drum machine, Minipops, is the backbone of pissshivers... the constant boom and tish that holds us together. Rewind to '95, and there was a second-hand music shop called Paul's Music Machine on Clare Street, which was like an Aladdin's Cave of musical goodies. I got an Elgam sexy steel-legged, Farfisa rip-off keyboard with an inbuilt phazer that I used live in Slipstream for a long time -still in my dad's shed. For one pissshivers gig, Minipops played everything in swing as she was cold, but after 10 minutes she'd warmed up – phew! We have a backup of this from a friend's studio session that we have on a sampler to trigger instead, but in the meantime, we just keep Minipops safe and warm!

Jonny, you're a very well-regarded drummer and percussionist, and can be heard on countless records, so what made you decide to pick up a guitar and start singing in front of a band? Once you'd made the change, did you encounter anything that you didn't expect?

Jonny: I still love to play drums every day before my day job teaching kids at the college starts, plus I programme/arrange drum parts for my mate Mark in our band Slipstream - so it's not like I've stopped playing at all. Whilst at another teaching job, I was in between giving drum lessons and just picked up the acoustic guitar from the wall mount and had learned an E shape from Mark again. I kept practising different shapes and then barre chords. I've had a stack of words for a while now and just started to sing melodies over the chords and rhythms I was making. I've been friends with Kathy and Stevie G for years, and they both encouraged me to stick at it. We eventually



jammed, but I put off doing a gig for ages... Kathy said, "Until we do our first gig, then we're not a band", I was like, nah, but it's true. So pissshivers was never a big plan, we're really having fun creating and recording these sounds, playing live and seeing where that takes us. Enjoying the process so far!

The greatest joy when attending a Piss Shivers show (other than getting to hear such amazing songs live) is seeing how much fun the three of you seem to be having - be honest, is it really that fun? We suspect it is, but you never know (some boy bands appear all sunshine and roses, but when the tell-all autobiographies are released, the pure rancour that hid behind the smiles is laid bare!)

Jonny: Thanks, Alex, you're very kind! Like I've said before, Kath and Steve are old friends, and we genuinely do enjoy it. I'm happy that they like the songs that I play to them (recorded on my '4 track' Zoom R24) and glad

FOREVER
to PISS SHIVERS

of their initial push to get me to do it. I always call Steve the proper guitarist – coz he is! Kathy comes up with some real flowery bass parts that we like (she'll hate me for that) and is also our band producer/bullshit detector – so I guess it all works out just fine, and I'm super grateful for that. Get back to us in a few years with that question lol

Your collective history in the local (and national) music scene gives you a perspective many will be denied.

Steve: My involvement with the local music scene began in '82, when, as an underage music fan/wannabe musician, I stumbled into The Black Lion (now Wig and Pen) on St Giles St, run by the wonderful William David Turvey RIP.

Here was a den of musicians and hell raisers putting on gigs in a DIY fashion. As soon as I could form a couple of chords, I was involved and never looked back.

By the 90's the scene had gravitated to The Racehorse (now Black Prince) on Abington Sq, managed by the late, great Peter Heyworth, with much the same ethos as The Black Lion, providing a platform to create and perform original material to like-minded souls.

The importance of these venues cannot be underestimated, and, along with The Labour Club (now Lab), The Garibaldi (RIP Tom), the lovely Pete and Kim at Big Noise studios, provided the glue that held Northampton's underground scene together, not just by giving the opportunity for self expression, but by creating a true community, a sanctuary from the 'norm', and an alternative to the humdrum.

Your songs often present a rather melancholy edge camouflaged in poppy, almost breezy arrangements ('Obliterate the Dark' being a good example). Do you find that your songwriting has changed as you've got older? To me, songs take on an extra weight as we accumulate experience and loss, and it's hard not to have those accretions build up and shape the way we create.

Jonny: That exactly! 'Obliterate the Dark' started out being about our friend Pat Fish, but it kind of morphed into a more general expression of loss that we all get to feel sooner or later. Songwriting is still a new thing for me when it comes to putting it all together – I've had a stack of work in progress notes and words for a long time but the time and place has only recently occurred – it's definitely breezy in the sense of how we put the tunes together; it'll be interesting to see how that evolves over time.

Personally, I miss that period from around '88 to '95 when Melody Maker, Sounds, and the NME seemed to be at the peak of their power and influence. Notes From The Void is our attempt to recreate the excitement for the bands and kids of today. Do you think the world would be a better place if the old school weekly music press still existed?

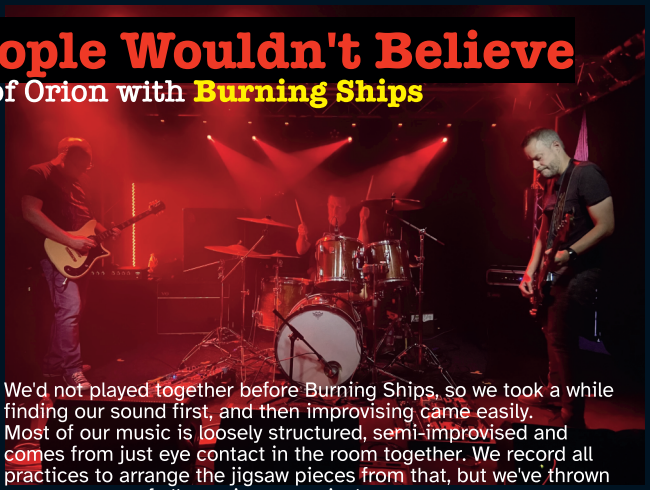
Jonny: Yes, you're right, all those papers were our barometers for bands/gigs etc, with great writing I thought and, yes, excitement over a band or scene for sure. I remember Wednesday afternoons in WHSmith, reading the NME and I'd hear a whisper...'you're not in it' over my shoulder from Mark. We often only found out when we were going on tour from those publications! Of course, prior to those days, it had a massive influence on me with the bands I was listening/being influenced by - even down to mail order badges and early ads for synthesizers that I dreamt about owning but could never afford. We also had John Peel as an information source too, which added to us feeling up to date and informed and his radio shows were just brilliant. John Lucibello on Northampton's NLive Radio, creates a similar vibe with his New Wave Hour show – check it out Monday eves or on catchup.

So, yes, more power to you Notes from The Void! Lotsa love, pissshivers xx

https://pissshivers1.bandcamp.com/

Things You People Wouldn't Believe

on fire off the shoulder of Orion with Burning Ships



Who are Burning Ships?
Nick (bass), Rupert (drums), Will (guitar)

What made you decide to go down the instrumental route?
None of us can sing. Being instrumental lets us focus on the sonics anyway, and some of us have come from bands where songs came out of improvisation, so we generally never play anything the same way twice. It's harder to do this with a singer.
It gives us room to have a structure but also to stretch into repetition or noise live. Depending on how antagonistic we're feeling.

Who are you influenced by?
Hawkwind, Neu!, The Heads, Swans, Bardo Pond, Spiritualized, Godspeed You! Black Emperor, Birthday Party, Part Chimp. Essentially anything endless or bludgeoning. Or both.

We suspect you've got a travelled history as musicians, do you?
We've all been in bands over the years, often in tandem. Will and Nick were in Men Of Unitus in the late 00s, a pummeling noise rock band. Will and Nick then had an instrumental post-punk party band called Crap Crab, who were a lighter reaction to the brutality and intensity of Unitus. Crap Crab played a lot in the Beds/Herts area in the 2010s and released a few records that you can still get from Bandcamp.
Rupert had an early post rock band from the late 80s doing Mogwai so far ahead of the curve that no one cared. Then Black Ramps doing Pavement/ Sebadoh quirk. Then Thousand Suns, doing a more psych version of where we're at now.
Rupert brought the looser edge to Will & Nick's more strict repetitive side when he joined.
There are also solo projects. Will's "WS80" project is a great one to check out on Bandcamp if you like chip-tune music played on guitars!

Tell us about your new album. What was the writing process like? Where was it recorded?
We're all slow burners - I don't think the universe wanted it to happen!
We formed before COVID, found our sound quite quickly, then deformed when it hit, which killed all the momentum. When we reconvened, we had to start from scratch.
We'd not played together before Burning Ships, so we took a while finding our sound first, and then improvising came easily.
Most of our music is loosely structured, semi-improvised and comes from just eye contact in the room together. We record all practices to arrange the jigsaw pieces from that, but we've thrown away a career of albums in our meticulous process.
We recorded the album ourselves, holed up over a weekend in November '25 and put it down on a couple of 8-track recorders. A third of it is completely improvised, and the rest is loosely structured. We did a couple of overdubs later, mainly to add drones to glue it all together as one coherent piece.
Nick mixed and mastered it, Ru did the artwork/design, and it'll be out in the summer from Bandcamp and at gigs.
We were keen to diy it, often based on previous bands' bad experiences of drawn-out sessions, causing us to lose our minds.
We're already thinking about what's next as we're alchemically brewing up weekly at rehearsals.

What's the scene like in your local area?
We're Herts-based, but that includes Beds and Cambs too. We have strong independent venues nearby - Esquires (Bedford), Club85 (Hitchin), Portland Arms (Cambridge), but we're pretty out of touch with what's going on locally now, so it's harder to find like minds. Our surrounding scene is predominantly tribute bands or metal nights.
The best shows we've played have been where the bill is quite different, with the common goal to be more experimental and in your face.
One of the favourite shows Will and Nick played (at Club85) was with MOU (noise-pummel-rock), DJ Scotch Egg (Gabba!) and Justice Yeldham (Australian glass-smash-noise-jazz – look him up!), an eclectic but fantastic night of experimental music.
We're looking forward to gigging as much as we can in support of the album and start connecting again with some forward-thinking people and venues that truly encourage new music.

What would you change about the music industry if you could?
In an ideal world, all the streaming services would pay bands and artists a much fairer share of the revenue they create for them, and Ticketmaster would give a % of their outrageous profits towards grassroots venues to help keep them alive.

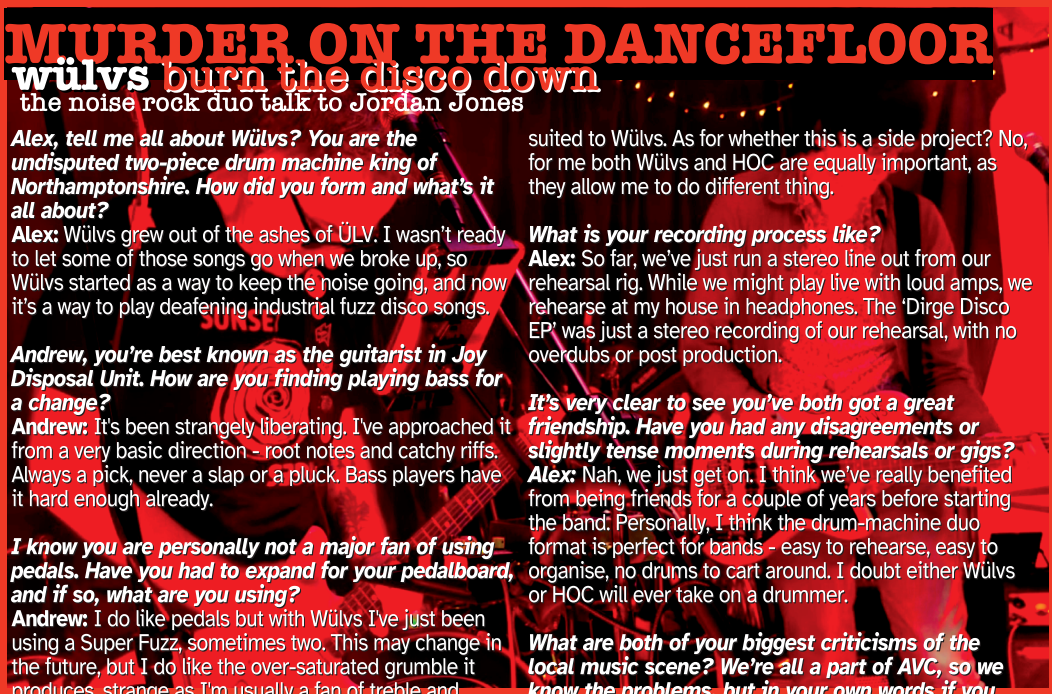
What's next for the band?
We're really hoping folks like the album! The plan is to play as much as we can for the rest of 2026 to push it and get people's ears adjusted, then meet like-minded band to play shows with.
We'd love to play some small festivals in 2027. We've got quite a lot of material to work on for the next record, and now that we know we can be fully DIY and self-sufficient, we are hoping to release more music quite soon.

instagram.com/burningshipsband

MURDER ON THE DANCEFLOOR

wülvs burn the disco down

the noise rock duo talk to Jordan Jones



Alex, tell me all about Wülvs? You are the undisputed two-piece drum machine king of Northamptonshire. How did you form and what's it all about?
Alex: Wülvs grew out of the ashes of ÜLV. I wasn't ready to let some of those songs go when we broke up, so Wülvs started as a way to keep the noise going, and now it's a way to play deafening industrial fuzz disco songs.

Andrew, you're best known as the guitarist in Joy Disposal Unit. How are you finding playing bass for a change?
Andrew: It's been strangely liberating. I've approached it from a very basic direction - root notes and catchy riffs. Always a pick, never a slap or a pluck. Bass players have it hard enough already.

I know you are personally not a major fan of using pedals. Have you had to expand for your pedalboard, and if so, what are you using?
Andrew: I do like pedals but with Wülvs I've just been using a Super Fuzz, sometimes two. This may change in the future, but I do like the over-saturated grumble it produces, strange as I'm usually a fan of treble and shrieking feedback.

Alex, how does your pedalboard differ to HOC and previous projects?
Alex: It's actually smaller! I've finally retired (for now, at least) the giant wooden box my grandfather built me in the 90s. The Wülvs board is all about layers of distortion and fuzz, where the HOC board is all about delays and reverbs cascading into each other. Both are stereo though, so I guess that's a common theme.

Are any of your guitars too high?
Andrew: Mine's a bit too high. I'm working on it.
Alex: Mine is at an acceptable height.

Alex, you also play in House of Cats with your wife Cheryl. How do the processes of writing, rehearsing, and gigging differ?
Alex: In HOC we have the advantage that we live together, so we rehearse every day. Wülvs has to fit around the lives of two people who don't live together, so it's a little slower. Wülvs is increasingly collaborative, which I love

Compared to both your respective projects of JDU and House of Cats, is this more of a side project, and how does the process compare for both of you?
Andrew: For me, working with a drum machine was weird at first, but second nature now. We also used in-ear monitors for the first gig, and I hated them.
Alex: We went back to using real amps after the first gig, as it became clear that the ampless rig HOC uses isn't suited to Wülvs. As for whether this is a side project? No, for me both Wülvs and HOC are equally important, as they allow me to do different thing.

What is your recording process like?
Alex: So far, we've just run a stereo line out from our rehearsal rig. While we might play live with loud amps, we rehearse at my house in headphones. The 'Dirge Disco EP' was just a stereo recording of our rehearsal, with no overdubs or post production.

It's very clear to see you've both got a great friendship. Have you had any disagreements or slightly tense moments during rehearsals or gigs?
Alex: Nah, we just get on. I think we've really benefited from being friends for a couple of years before starting the band. Personally, I think the drum-machine duo format is perfect for bands - easy to rehearse, easy to organise, no drums to cart around. I doubt either Wülvs or HOC will ever take on a drummer.

What are both of your biggest criticisms of the local music scene? We're all a part of AVC, so we know the problems, but in your own words if you can change anything, what would it be?
Andrew: I would have all cover and tribute bands rounded up and sent to a gulag. Joking aside, this is a big problem; not only do these bands stink up whatever stage they are on, they are also an affront to the eyes with their shit band photos and terrible AI promo.
Alex: Yeah, the AI stuff and cover bands need to go.

If you had to recommend one album that everyone needs to hear and influences your sound, what is it?
Andrew: Barbed Wire Kisses, the Jesus and Mary Chain b-sides compilation. It's minimal, mostly drum-machine driven and very abrasive.
Alex: I'm not sure it influences my sound in this band, but everyone needs to hear 'The Texas Jerusalem Crossroads' by Lift To Experience.

What is next for the band?
Andrew: New songs, obviously. We're currently working on one called "Neo Luddites, Rise!" with me on vocals, which will hopefully have been played live by the time you read this.
Alex: Another 6-song EP perhaps? Maybe re-record some of the super rough stuff from the 'Dirge Disco EP'. More songs and gigs, absolutely.

Finally, how do you get your hair so fantastic, Andrew? I ask as I'm going grey already and look like a Bob Dylan wannabe!
Andrew: Dye your hair (I do - went grey in my 20s) and cut it yourself or get whoever is near at hand to do it for you. Look at pictures of Richard Hell.

REVIEWS

We take a look at recent releases from across Shoetown and beyond

LIVE

Godzella

The Lab, 28/05/26

Do bands only count if they last for years? Is it a prerequisite of approval from audiences and peers that a band should be in it for the long haul from day one? And do we take bands less seriously if they only exist for a short time? **Joy Division** technically only existed for two years yet their impact is immeasurable, so who knows? So then to Godzella, a seemingly rotating cast of young students who have already said on these pages that they'll probably split up when they all go to uni. Should we just ignore them then? To do so would be rather silly, as we'd be denying ourselves the joy of seeing and hearing a band that veers from barely steered chaos to a pure wall of controlled noise at the blink of an eye. Some songs stumble, others flatten the audience with a sound I can only describe as **Sonic Youth** being played by **Motörhead** with occasional **Jools Holland**-style piano. They've got a great name, they're fun incarnated into a multi-member gang so it doesn't matter if they only last for the shortest of times. Go see them while you can. (*photo and words AB*)

High Maintenance

The Lab, 28/05/26

We've talked a fair bit about Leicester's brilliant Riotous Collective here at AVC, so High Maintenance (fronted by Northampton via South Shields' Jen Kenny) need no introduction. They take to the stage in front of a packed out crowd at the Lab and deliver a great set of 60's infused garage rock. There's nothing wrong with two-chord punk, but High Maintenance's sound - all swirling melodica and overdriven guitars - harkens back to an earlier time and is better for it. The songs are far from retro though; they are witty and angry at all the right things, never indulgent and get the crowd moving. Boilers and now High Maintenance - surely all the Riotous Collective bands can't be this good? (AS)

SINGLES

SINGLE OF THE MONTH

The Keepers *"Death Cries Alone"*

If you've seen The Keepers in the last few months you've almost certainly thought 'well, this is a banger!' when they've closed with "Death Cries Alone". The long awaited new single from Jordan Jones' Shoetown answer to The Fall (in terms of rotating membership, rather than sound) is indeed a banger. Epic in all the right ways, Jones charts the hard edged reality of the line between love and hate across a punchy 4 and a half minutes. Songs like 'Death Cries Alone' make a very strong argument for the continued support of original acts, as it's the kind of anthem that The Killers would commit an atrocity to get their hands on. If the music industry survives, 'Death Cries Alone' will be being belted out in 30 years time in a flat roof pub somewhere by the frontman of a covers act called 'Amplifyer (playing the best of Woahgetter, The Keepers, and Foo Fighters)'.

Maddox Jones *"This Time We'll Be Winning"*

Not as good as the top 70 smash 'Go For It' by Coventry City's 1987 squad.

Our Souls *"DIY Misery"*

Six punchy, fuzzed-up, semi-punk songs that hark back to the golden days of Leatherface featuring regularly in the NME. There are also chunks of "Hate Your Friends" era Lemonheads, Mega City Four, Senseless Things, and Canada's Doughboys in the mix, which is no bad thing. Next time Midway Still play in Leicester, Our Souls need to be on the bill.

Julius Seizure *"I Used To Be A Man"*

After a little while away, Julius Seizure return with a short, sharp jolt of a song seemingly about becoming a cyborg. 'I Used To Be A Man' is the strongest release so far, with frontman/sole member Louis' Estuary bark (think a garage-rock Billy Bragg) taking centre stage. The music is a mix of relentless drum machine, bubbling synth bass and APTBS-esque Jaguar abuse. Great stuff

Luna Rosa *"Lift Me Up"*

An intro that wouldn't sound out of place on Aaron Roche's astonishing "!BlurMyEyes", takes a sudden swerve into a slice of stadium rock tailor-made for a "Goal Of The Week" montage on Grandstand. Will no doubt do very well indeed.

The Chomp *"Demo"*

You've got to love a band who open their debut release with a song that is either named after them or was the source of the band name. 'The Chomp' exhorts that we should all 'fear the Chomp', and it reminds us of a hardcore take on Ten Benson's 'The Claw'. We've decided that The Chomp are named in tribute to 1984's ZX Spectrum Pacman clone 'Chomp!', and no matter how many times the band might try to explain otherwise, NFTV will not be swayed from this belief. The music is a muscular post-hardcore chug, topped out with gravel-gargled vocals, delivered in such a vein-busting rage that the singer will probably have a stroke on stage someday. They're almost certainly going to be huge on the local scene very soon.

Maddox Jones *"This Time We'll Be Winning"*

Another international football tournament, another desperate attempt shat onto the pitch. Even Dave Crawford's production can't polish this turd. Knocked out in the group stage. Foul! (AS) (*yes, we have reviewed it twice. Ed*).

House of Cats *"Casting Shadows b/w Here We Come"*
House of Cat's new single 'Casting Shadows' is a gorgeous slice of post-punk that showcases the best of the husband/wife duo's musical abilities. Cheryl's bass playing is simple yet effective and complements the rhythm drenched beat that is omnipresent throughout the track. Alex channels his inner Oliver Ackermann and creates a wall of noise that hits you like a tidal wave. Overall, House of Cats may be relatively new, but it is clear that they have found their sound and are determined to leave their mark on the local scene. If you are a fan of the Cure or want a song to listen to when you're walking home at night, this one is for you. (LS)

ALBUMS

AV Sunset *"Vs. Reality"*
AV Sunset's sophomore album firmly plants the band's tanks on Hans Zimmer, Mogwai and Clint Mansell's film score lawn, with 'Maat Mons' liberally borrowing from both Inception's 'Time' and the Moon soundtrack's 'Welcome to Luna Industries'. Elsewhere, the hushed control of Jóhann Jóhannsson and Max Richter is brought to mind, while opener 'To Set the World on Six and Seven' would have Stuart Braithwaite wondering who has nicked his notebook. Don't misunderstand, these are not bad things; epic instrumental rock as a genre is very hard to innovate in without sounding like unlistenable atonal shite, and no one wants that (witness the dismal Mr. Blobby-gone-Beefheart hipster nonsense from current media darlings Angine de Poitrine). AV Sunset absolutely excel in their chosen field, easily matching the melodic heights of Clint Mansell or Richter, while inserting more variety into their sound than Mogwai have managed in a great many years. They're so good at this, they should be chasing syncing deals hard, as they could make a lot of money out of these songs.
"Vs. Reality" is guaranteed to sound amazing live, documenting a band at the top of their game, and is an album we thoroughly enjoyed from start to finish.

Veins *"A New Forever"*
The first thought in starting the new album by Veins is 'Is this the right record?' as piano, strings, and an autotuned vocal present something that sounds utterly unlike what we expected. Where we were anticipating a Placebo-style roar of guitar, the first two minutes of 'Criminal' are closer to 'Right Where It Belongs' by Nine Inch Nails than anything Brian Molko has ever produced. When the guitars do hit, they're a sheet metal wall, tracing an elegant arc of near choral reverie.
Superbly produced by drummer Dan Appleyard, "A New Forever" is a chrome-plated masterpiece of commercial high-sheen pop-metal. Each song sounds like it could be a single, with the whole building to the heartfelt ballad 'Champions Fall', closing the album on a more reflective note than the sturm und drang of the preceding 42 minutes.
If you like your rock epic and standing shoulder to shoulder with Placebo, the poppier end of Trent Reznor's work, or even occasionally channelling Babylon Zoo, then you'll be immediately at home with Veins.

Angine De Poitrine *"Vol.II"*
Novelty bullshit for hipster wankers.

ALBUM OF THE MONTH
Violet's Gone "III"

With a discography that is swiftly heading towards 60 releases over the last couple of decades, the ever-prolific Chris Fordham returns to his Violet's Gone project after diversions into Kieran Hebden-infused electronica under the [Pyxis] moniker (reviewed in issue 6). While [Pyxis] flirted with texture and skittering beats, 'III' has more in common with Hebden's former Fridge colleague Adem's work, being a series of songs built around acoustic instrumentation.
Amongst the influences listed in his press release, there's a definite whiff of a modern take on the more whimsical end of the Beatles' output, and the twinkle of Radiohead is discernible in the coda of 'Buried Treasure', while Chris's voice sits somewhere between the heartfelt croon of Thom Yorke and the down-to-earth warmth of Badly Drawn Boy's Damon Gough.
In a crowded field of earnest singer-songwriters, Fordham has allowed retreat and insularity to become his amplifier, whispering where others shout, allowing sounds to unspool where other, less deft hands would drop them onto a loopstation and flatten all charm from them.
That's not to say that the music is that of a hermit trying not to be heard; there's breezy pop in here, and "Starry Sky" even sounds like there's a distant layer of fuzz beneath the acoustic stomp and clanking cymbals while 'Forgotten Dear' marries some vocal grit to sitar and shakers, but this is absolutely the kind of music that can only be made when a single creative voice is in charge at every step of the process.
It's not all hushed late-night sounds, though, with 'The Phantom' dropping sudden, deafening noise into the mix just when you least expect it. It's not quite the 'dive for the volume knob' that PJ Harvey achieved on the title track of 1993's "Rid of Me", but it has a similar impact. Rather neatly, the very next song, 'Footprints', pulls the same trick in reverse, when the volume drops away suddenly to almost nothing, leaving you straining to hear a distant vocal and guitar. Just when you think you've got the measure of the album, 'Fake Smiles' upends your expectations with a gnarly fuzz guitar propelling a song that Cheap Bleach would be proud of (without their emo shouting replaced by Chris's gentle warmth), fuzz that sticks around into album closer and distillation of all that has come before, 'Broken Actor'
"III" is a late-night companion to Badly Drawn Boy's "Hour of Bewilderbeast" or a calming comedown to be taken after the existential pummelling of "OK Computer", and in a world with any justice would be hailed as a peer of both. (AB)

MORE ALBUMS

The Keepers *"Love"*
It may have taken them over a decade, but Jordan Jones' long-running project, The Keepers, have finally released their debut album. Aptly titled "Love", Jones' admiration of the Beatles is writ large across these 11 tracks. Backing vocals phase around the stereo field, mellotrons warble, twelve-string guitars jangle, while throughout Jones' Davey Jones-meets-Brett Anderson lead vocal demands attention.
It's not just classic 60's pop that's influenced The Keepers, 'She's So Wasted' wouldn't have sounded out of place in the early days of Suede, 'Death Cries Alone' would have Brandon Flowers planning what size pool to spend the royalties on, while 'Making Up For Lost Time' could have slotted into "Reading, Writing and Arithmetic" by The Sundays.
Elsewhere, the title track opens with a 'Loaded' style tabla beat under vocal samples before turning into a Kula Shaker-esque acid wig-out, and 'White Wine Wednesday' is the kind of tune Morrissey wishes he was still writing. 'You're All I Need' is back to the Beatles influences, being essentially a re-write of 'Tomorrow Never Knows' with a slight edge of 'Listen To The Flower People' by Spinal Tap - neither bad things.
The Keepers have been playing for so long that you're certain to have heard these songs many times, which lends "Love" the feeling of a greatest hits compilation, rather than a debut album. Jones clearly loves pop music from all eras, and "Love" is his homage to the giants who have come before.

Ascetics *"Ascetics"*
Ascetics debut, delivered after a long period of the band finding themselves, re-evaluating, and partially reinventing, repeatedly holds itself back from tipping into over-saturated bombast, preferring to deliver barbed social commentary over the kind of music that wouldn't have sounded out of place on early 90's albums by Seam, Cell, or Codeine. Recorded in a scout hut by the band themselves, the mix is direct, giving everything a chance to breathe rarely heard these days. The vocals are bone dry, the guitars immediate, the bass a low thrum, and the drum a tight cracking. If comparisons must be drawn sonically, there's the sense that the ghost of Steve Albini was looking over their shoulders as they committed these songs to tape.
There's a sense of control and confidence here, a feeling that Ascetics know what they're doing and don't feel any need to go over the top with flash or artifice. A very promising debut, and I suspect this is a band that will truly bloom when they hit album two having had chance to build on what they've achieved here.

LIVE

On The Jank

The Lab
28th May

If you were to believe the posters of almost every gig in Northampton, you'd be fooled into thinking this was a town with nothing but guitars pumping through its veins. From the wretches clogging up the flat roof pubs in cover bands, via the open mic oddballs, the Stalkers/Twinfest twangers, and the stream of out-of-town kids with forward-facing haircuts and guitars slung so high you'd believe them to be necklaces at Picky New shows, you'd probably assume that Shoetown gives zero fucks for beeps and bleeps. Even the bigger acts that are electronic adjacent, like **Litesleeper**, tote a row of guitars stage front.
It's easy to simply accept that electronica hasn't made any inroads into our big town, but you'd be wrong. Things are changing, plans are hatching, and groups such as the newly launched **Hamtune** are working behind the scenes to remind our neighbours that music doesn't start and end with six strings and earnest balladeering.
Topping a bill where guitars had ruled, the duo of **On The Jank** stood on stage facing each other over tables of keyboards and sequencers before proceeding to convert a packed room sweltering in the recent heatwave into an even hotter mass of dancing bodies. Ollie and Mo, the brains behind the band, radiated joy as they slammed through a set filled with nothing but bangers. Calling to mind **Radiohead** at their most electronic at times, and **Adamski** at others (especially during single '*Running Hard*', where a **Quentin Dupieux** Flat Eric splat of synth meets a '*Killer*' melody delivered in a distinctly **Thom Yorke** falsetto), On The Jank have an addictive sound that's all their own and sinks its claws into the part of your brain that makes you want to dance. If you're looking for other frames of reference, think '*Packt Like Sardines in a Crushd Tin Box*' from '*Amnesiac*', but you really should just get down to their next show and see for yourself. Hopefully, we'll be seeing more live electronica emerging over the next year and I suspect On The Jank will be occupying a slot high up the bill at Voidfest 2027.
(photo and words AB)

REWIND

We look back at releases from before our 1st issue

In July 1972, Northampton psych-rock band DARK recorded 'Dark Round The Edges' album at the now demolished SIS Studio. Knowing the band was likely to break up soon, frontman Steve Giles wanted to ensure that he had something to make the years in DARK tangible. The recording was made, 64 vinyl copies pressed up (with a mixture of black and white and colour sleeves) and sold for £3 each. And that was that, until word of mouth started to spread about this obscure psyche-prog album that was rarer than hens teeth. Interest grew, copies started to appear on international auction sites, the originals started to go for silly money, soon hitting 5 figures for copies in a good condition. These days even reissues from the 90s and 00s are hitting four figures on Discogs, while CD copies of dubious provenance fill the listings.
Along the way, the original sleeve art was replaced by a photo Giles' took of an ex-girlfriend (wonderfully on message for the era, a Vicar's daughter) and it's this cover that has become the 'standard'. No matter which sleeve 'Dark Round The Edges' is in, this writer feels it's unlikely that former members of DARK are benefiting financially from the steadily growing interest.
But what of the music? It's very much of its time, the 70's 'local studio' sound giving it a fantastic lo-fi edge, while the vocals are tuneful and confident. Where DARK truly shine is on the extended guitar blowouts, length fuzz drenched jams that could easily be outtakes from 'Tago Mago' by Can. On 8 minute centrepiece 'Live For Today' drummer Clive Thorneycroft slips into a groove that Jaki Liebezeit would have been proud of, while the dual guitar interplay before an absolutely wild fuzz-wah solo hits could easily be a proto-Television. Closer 'Zero Time' is a fuzzed-out close relative of The Stereo Shoestring's 'On The Road South', and is superb. One can only imagine how good this must have sounded live and loud.
The whole thing is over in less than 40 minutes, which is the perfect length for any album.
There are several versions available digitally online, including at least two on Bandcamp, but I'd recommend the Steve Giles remaster from 2020.

https://dark8.bandcamp.com/album/dark-round-the-edges-steve-giles-remaster

Katie Malco
"*Failures*"
6131 Records
Released
2020

"I am empty, I am a mess/I'm not in control of any of this," proclaims Katie Malco in the second verse of Peckham. It's emblematic of the self-deprecating vulnerability of her lyrics on this album, and I could pick examples from almost every song: "I'll love you endlessly if you can pretend to love me" (Fractures); "I don't care about you, you sure don't care about me" (September). The chorus of Creatures is an almost anthemic repetition of "Lose the battle and lose the war" - and the lyrics of that song provide the album's title, which could be said to speak for itself.

Malco had been a fixture of the local music scene for so long, that when this album was released in 2020, it was hard to believe it was her debut. True, Alcopop Records had compiled an LP from two EPs in 2012, but Failures was a long time coming. Contrary to its title, it was worth the wait. These songs are anything but failures.

Creatures and the equally zoological opener, Animal, are the only tracks to fit the standard indie-rock mould, proving that she can be upbeat musically when she wants to be. The rest of the album showcases her ability with a slow hook, atmospheric arrangements, and those sad, poetic words.

Let's Go To War feels like an epic protest song made personal, while TW mourns the loss of a friend. It's all quite beautiful and leaves you hoping she doesn't take so long to get her next album out. The real killer punch comes early though. The second track, Brooklyn, released as the album's first single and accompanied by a touching video, is a slow-burn portrait of long-distance affection that really stays with you. Look it up on YouTube and then buy this record. (DA)

The Wot Now?

The Lab, 28/05/26

Proof that acoustic music doesn't need to be maudlin whining, or the kind of 'chugga chugga chugga chugga' strumming so beloved of those musicians Daphne and Celeste immortalised in 'Basic Busker' on their incredible 2018 '...Save The World' album, the duo of Katy (vocals) and Six (guitar and vocals) held the attention of a packed Lab on a hot early summer evening. A mixture of well chosen covers spun into new shapes, as well as some rather impressive originals shows why the duo are getting regular shows around the region. Their secret weapons are two complementary yet very different voices, and personalities that lift what could end up being just background music to something that it's impossible to ignore. Six has that acerbic wit that the late Pete Burns perfected, making pointed jokes between songs, and directly addressing her status as a trans woman in a way that would have bigots squirming. Despite having what I think is possibly the worst band name of all time, The Wot Now? are something to be treasured. Don't miss them if they play near you. (words and photo AB)

The Venus Fly Trap

The Black Prince, 21/06/26

Any band about to enter their 5th decade should have amassed a set so strong that every song sounds like a single, and that's very much the case with Alex Novak's long running Venus Fly Trap. Opening tonight for fellow 80's survivors The March Violets in a stifling hot Black Prince (that room desperately need aircon), Alex and guitarist Andy Denton, ably supported by a hammering drum machine, turn out a series of punchy bangers that get the good sized audience dancing. Sounding somehow a lot fuller than the last time we saw them at the same venue, the Venus Fly Trap perform with all the urgency of men 40 years younger, proof that the ageism that undeniably exists in our local scene is misplaced and wrong. Prowling the stage in black wraparound shades Alex radiates controlled menace and one wonders if Bono caught these Northampton veterans at some point, stealing the look for his Fly persona during the 'Achtung Baby!' era. Let's hope for a new album soon, as there's still a lot left for the Venus Fly Trap to say about fast cars, silver spaceships, and insect mutation, and a third act that should be looked forward to by anyone who has paid attention for the first two.
(words and photo AB)

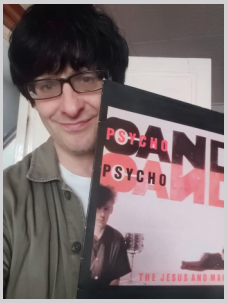
LISTEN TO THIS!

A Void Collective members recommend some records

Maevis Darkhorse
The Velvet Underground & Nico - S/T (1967)
"The debut album that shook the world...eventually, inspired a thousand bands. Bringing together 3 wild cards - Lou Reed, John Cale and Nico, that resulted in such mad alchemy. Psychedelic...drones... love songs...drug addiction... discordant noise. This album is always relevant and inspiring. When I first discovered it in 1988, it blew my mind."

Louis Sefton
Basement - Colourmeinkindness (2012)
"As a guitarist, Basement has heavily inspired my approach to writing simple but effective riffs that will stick in your head for ages. A must listen for fans of emo and grunge."

Andrew Slack
Jesus and Mary Chain - Psychocandy (1985)



"Pop songs slathered with fuzz, feedback and reverb. Hearing 'Never Understand' for the first time was a genuine life changing moment for me. A timeless, post-punk classic by Scotland's best Reid brothers."

Cheryl Botten-Smith
Rev Magnetic - Versus Universe (2019)
"Each track builds a story through a heady mix of forthright fuzz laden magic, pitched against Vaughan Williams-esque intensely emotional violin headlines. It is just beautiful. Listen to it. You won't regret it, I promise."

Dave Abdy
The Boo Radleys - Giant Steps (1993)

"An hour of glorious psychedelic indie pop that delights and amazes in equal measure, Giant Steps will always have a special place in my heart."

Tanya Falconer
Swervedriver - Mezcal Head (1993)
"hits the perfect sweet spot between heavy, roaring guitars and catchy, melodic space rock, instantly taking me back to my youth. Those massive riffs became the soundtrack to everything my best friend and I got up to back then. It's a deeply emotional time capsule of the adventures we shared. I'll be seeing them in October in London and can't bloody wait! Never lose that feeling..."

Alex Botten
Lift To Experience - The Texas Jerusalem Crossroads (2001)
"Glorious cloudscraping guitars meet moments of hushed quiet as Fire and Brimstone Preacher's son, Josh T. Pearson and band lay out the Biblical End of the World centred on the Lone Star State, over 50 minutes of sonic perfection. 'Don't you boys know nothin'? USA is the centre of Jerusalem!'"

Simon Flatman
Mansun - Six (1998)
"I thought it was rubbish when it first came out. Its ludicrousness eventually won me over. Over an hour of songs that get bored of themselves after a minute, Winnie-the-Pooh and the Catholic Church. It's brilliant."

Wayne Smith
Manic Street Preachers - The Holy Bible (1994)
"White hot post punk seethes from the speakers while you're shouted at about how the human race is far worse than you'd previously assumed. Party album."

FORMAL IDENTIFICATION

Viewed Upon Death ring in the changes

Tell us who you are for anyone unaware.
We are Ben Markham, Harvey Yates, Louis Sefton and Harvey Melton, also known as Viewed Upon Death! An independent noise rock band based in Bedfordshire with a deep love for post-rock, post-punk and post-hardcore (and more post)!

You've recently changed line-up, how did that come about?
Unfortunately our amazing former bassist Lewis Simpson had to leave due to going to Uni up North. However, we couldn't be luckier to have the one and only Louis Sefton joining us as his replacement. He's been an excellent, passionate member so far, and we can't wait to work with him as we start our future projects!

The music industry is broken. What bullshit have you encountered that should be put straight in the bin?
I've seen time and time again, sadly, friends of mine (and even myself) get raked in by sleazy event managers. Artists will pack out privately owned venues, making the promoter hundreds or even thousands of pounds through ticket sales and drinks. Yet the 'promoters' run off with all the profit sitting dormant in their bank account while we artists get paid "in exposure" or pennies. I could rant about it for hours, but all artists (and people) deserve a living wage, and promoters like that can do one.

What would you change about the current music scene in the UK if you could?
I suppose the last response works here as well, but I always love seeing people push boundaries and be so openly themselves, and I feel the industry rewards those pretending to be something other than what they really are, at the moment. I'd love to see more bands and artists being more unabashedly themselves!

Tell us what each member's favourite album is
The impossible question, but here's our attempts!
Harvey Yates: Any album by Killing Joke, especially Extremities and Brighter Than a Thousand Suns
Ben Markham: Between Ants from Up There by BCNR or Newfound Interest In Connecticut's first album, they're all 10/10 and definitely inspired my sound the most
Harvey Melton: fallingwithscissors - the death and birth of an angel, one of the most unique, intense, emotional and forward-thinking projects I've ever heard
Louis Sefton: between He is Legend - I am Hollywood and Underoath - they're only chasing safety

What's the plan for Viewed Upon Death?
At the moment, we're really focusing on bringing new songs to the set, playing as much as we can, wherever we can, and releasing (hopefully soon!) our debut EP!

instagram.com/viewed_upon_deathband

TEN CENTS NEVER TASTED SO GOOD

Louis Sefton speaks to The Chomp

Who are the Chomp?
We are 4 mates from Northampton/MiltonKeynes, playing hardcore punk.

Tell us about how you formed.
Three of us are from an emo band that came to an end in 2025. Whilst that was winding down, we grabbed our guitarist, who we've been mates with for a bit and just started working on what we'd been wanting to write for a while.

As a band, who are your biggest musical inspirations?
Ceremony, Trapped Under Ice, and Backtrack are probably the easiest to mention, but we pull influences from a variety of artists from John Prine to Crass. Whether you can hear that in the songs, we don't know.

In recent years, there has been a growing awareness of how crooked Spotify and other streaming platforms are, given how little they pay bands/artists. Was releasing your demo on Bandcamp a way of saying 'screw you' to Spotify and other music providers?
Honestly, even releasing music on Bandcamp is a still a compromise (I fear Epic Games will trap us in Fortnite). We are for sure conscious of the gross power imbalance between the artists and the DSPs and it's something we don't want to buy into. There's something much nicer about having your work actively searched for that platforms like Bandcamp do cater to.

There is a very strong DIY aesthetic within your image, especially with you guys recording your EP at Stalkers and mixing and mastering it yourselves. What advice would you give to up and coming bands/ artists who are looking to go down a DIY route?
Most of the time, DIY isn't a choice to make, it's just what you do when your parents don't have blue names on Wikipedia. It does allow you to be less unwavering in terms of how you present your work.
Our advice to anyone thinking about starting to do anything in art: Just do it. If you can't, someone else can. Make friends with them. Get involved, build a community, go to shows. Don't be afraid that what you're doing isn't as good as the next band. Oh, and don't use AI, you fucking melons.

From playing shows at the Crauford Arms and Newcross Inn to releasing an EP and merch, you guys have had a strong start. What is next for the band?
Play shows, write, make mates. Continue til we're dead.

Lastly, what albums would you recommend to people who are first time listeners of hardcore punk?
Have Heart - Songs to scream at the sun
Black Flag - Damaged
Descendants - Everything Sucks
Rites Of Spring - Rites Of Spring
Trapped Under Ice - Secrets of the world

instagram.com/chomp.hc

"And Your Bird Can Sing" by Ali Jeffery

The Flatman Crossword

Across

4. Massive Attack single makes water run from the eyes (8)

5. 80s-90s boy band up for massive enjoyment (3,3)

6. Strokes LP questions existence and it is shit (2,4,2)

9. Surname of Depeche Mode writer explodes in shower of guts (4)

10. Veruca Salt single is particularly agitated and in there, see? (7)

11. Olivia Rodrigo single bears a strange sense of the familiar (4,2)

Down

1. Cabbage-like surname of musician who formed the Velvet Underground (4)

2. House of Love single in Christ? (9)

3. Supergrass single is deeply emotional (6)

4. AC/DC's explosive album (1,1,1)

7. Highly Evolved botanical band that just wanted to Get Free (3,5)

8. Beginning section of single by The XX (5)

Avoid Future Disasters with our own Astrology Pundit

Terry 'Tel' Kinesis

Aries (March 21 - Apr 20)
Although cursed with a face like Peter Beardsley you have an inner beauty that shines like Jules Rimet. Don't be objectified - you're no ones trophy.

Taurus (Apr 21 - May 21)
The time for indecision is over. You have procrastinated, hesitated and dilly-dallied enough. Now is the time for action. Take the Steve Bull by the horns and ride it to victory!

Gemini (May 22 – June 21)
Your stars have aligned with human Easter Island statue, David Platt; no doubt a deeply spiritual man. This month you'll be on top of the world.

Cancer (June 22 – July 22)
Keep going the way you're going sunshine, and Gazza's tears are yours to drink. It's time to clean up your act or miss out on the final.

Leo (July 23 – Aug 22)
Anger is an energy, but not when you're thumping a penalty straight at the keeper. Like Stuart Pearce, redemption is at hand but could be 6 years too late.

Virgo (Aug 23 – Sept 22)
Likewise, was Chris Waddle thinking of Gascoigne's despair when his attempt went sailing over the top? We'll never know but keep your eye on the ball this month.

Libra (Sept 23 – Oct 22)
Although a brilliant player, "Crisp Man" Gary Lineker's ability to shit himself on pitch is often overlooked. Good sportsmanship be damned - It's important to use all weapons in your ARSEnal.

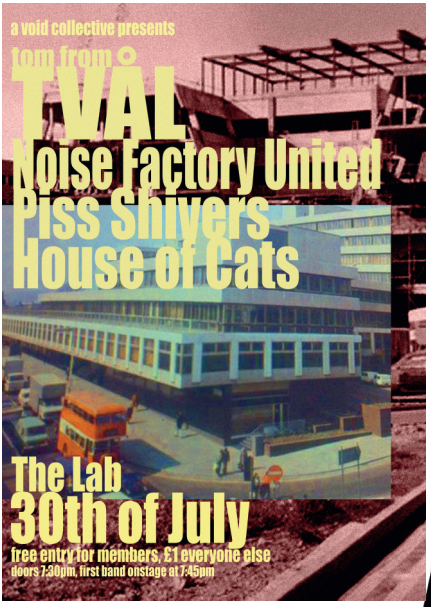
Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21)
Like Bryan Robson, the pride of Chester-le-Street, you're a delicate flower and break easily. Look after yourself, pet.

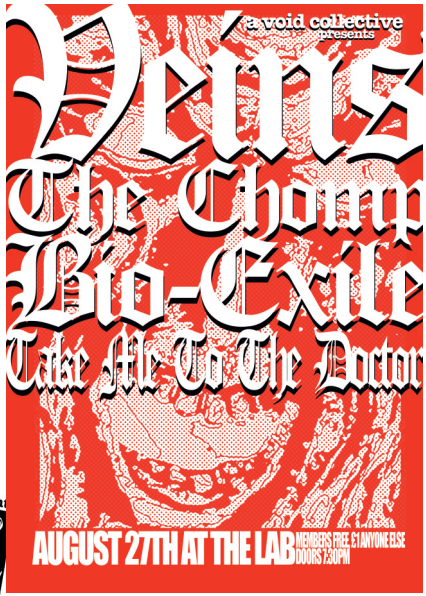
Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21)
For every John Barnes there's a John Webb, doomed to sit it out until the end of time (or a third place play-off against Italy), forgotten and unappreciated. This could be you. Or not. What do I know?

Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 20)
Life has been unfair this month but try to imagine how it was for Rudi Voller, filled with a powerful sense of injustice as slimy tendrils of Frank Rijkaard's spit oozed through his German mullet.

Aquarius (Jan 21 – Feb 19)
Much like Dave Beasant, you're stuck on the substitute bench of life, quietly hatching revenge plots against an unsuspecting Peter Shilton. Express yourself!

Pisces (Feb 20 – March 20)
Sir Bobby Robson is up there now, looking down on us all like a magnificent father. Engrave his words upon your heart: "We didn't underestimate them, they were just better than we thought".





Three incredible free gigs coming up, don't miss them!

We can only keep doing this if you keep coming and supporting the bands. The shows are free, tell your friends! Tell your mum! Tell your work colleagues! Northampton has amazing things going on! Not only are we doing stuff but there's **Picky New Promotions**, and **Hushed**, and **Sketchhead**, and many others. Things are happening! Don't miss out!

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